MOTION REGARDING JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSES ON THE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1988

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI S.S. BARNALA): Madam, I beg to move: "That this House concurs in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha do join in the Joint Committee 8 of the Houses on the Bill further to amend the Essential Commodities Act, 1995, and resolves that the following Members of the Rajya Sabha be nominated to serve on the said Joint Committee:—

1. Shri Sangh Priya Gautam
2. Shri Vedprakash P. Goyal
3. Shri Adhik Shirodkar
4. Shri Bhuvnesh Chaturvedi
5. Shri Sankaralingam
6. Shri Ghufran Azam
7. Kumari Nirmala Deshpande
8. Shri Barjinder Singh Hamdard
9. Shri Ashok Mitra
10. Shri Gaya Singh"

The question was put and the Motion was adopted.

SPECIAL MENTIONS—Contd.

Devastating Floods and Sinking of Majuli Island in Assam

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA (Assam): Madam, Assam has a distinction of having comparatively the highest number of rivers, mostly as tributaries of the mighty Brahmaputra. The vast riverine and non-hilly areas around the Brahmaputra cause devastating floods almost every year, destroying millions of hectares of cultivable lands, destroying countless number of dwelling houses, besides drowning hundreds of cattle as also human beings—old and young, men and women—almost perennially. The scourge has gradually grown to alarming proportions, particularly after the great earthquake of 1950 which virtually destroyed the entire topography of Assam. The bed of the Brahmaputra has risen almost ten times since the earthquake, resulting in siltage, extensively overflowing innumerable bunds and embankments causing inestimable and untold misery and loss to millions of people every year.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM) In the Chair: In the recent floods more than 60 people died and countless number of cattle perished and more than one-and-a-half lakh people have been rendered homeless, forced to take shelter in relief camps maintained by the State Government.

The financial help from the Central Government, including relief materials like rice, *atta,* mustard oil and kerosene, has not been supplied sufficiently and the help of the Agriculture Department, supplying seedlings for fresh cultivation, has not been forthcoming so far.

It is, therefore, to urge upon the Government of India to arrange an immediate visit of the Prime Minister and the Agriculture Minister to visit the flood-hit areas as early as possible and arrange adequate urgent measures for necessary relief to the people for their relief and rehabilitation. It is further requested to arrange a permanent solution to the scourge by fully dredging the Brahmaputra and take steps for undertaking the long-pending river-valley projects of Subansiri and Deband which could contribute substantially not only to lesson the impact of floods but would also generate considerable electric power at comparatively lower cost thus opening vistas for establishing varied industries therewith.

Inter alia, the Brahmaputra Board which was constituted by this Government, remaining only as a shapeless, disfigured showpiece, needs to be risen from its long slumber and put into proper use.